

In the Claims:

Please cancel Claims 5, 7, 8, 10-14 and 21-26, without prejudice, and amend Claims 1, 6, 15 and 16 as indicated below. The status of all pending claims is as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A low noise pneumatic tire having a tread, the tread having a radially inner surface, a belt-shaped sound absorbing member being mounted on the radially inner surface of the tread by an annular fixing elastic band, the belt-shaped sound absorbing member being formed of a porous material and having a width of 40% to 90% of a maximum width of the tire and a thickness of 5mm to 50 mm,

whereby the elastic force of the elastic band secures the sound absorbing member on the inner surface of the tread, ~~and~~

wherein the belt-shaped sound absorbing member has a radially inner surface and a radially outer surface, at least one of the radially inner and outer surfaces of the belt-shaped sound absorbing member has notches that extend widthwisely of the belt-shaped sound absorbing member and are disposed at prescribed intervals longitudinally of the belt-shaped sound absorbing member, and

wherein one of the radially inner and outer surfaces has the widthwisely extending notches, and the other of the radially inner and outer surfaces has longitudinally extending notches.

2. (Original) A low noise pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein the belt-shaped sound absorbing member is formed in a curved manner widthwisely and/or longitudinally thereof so as to have a shape extending along the radially inner surface of the tread.

3. (Previously Presented) A low noise pneumatic tire according to claim 2, wherein the belt-shaped sound absorbing member has a radially outer surface formed in the curved manner with a radius of curvature, the radius of curvature of the radially outer surface being 0.7 to 1.3 times longer than that of the radially inner surface of the tread.

4-5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) A low noise pneumatic tire according to ~~claim 4~~claim 1, wherein the widthwisely extending notches each have a depth of 20% to 90% of the thickness of the belt-shaped sound absorbing member, the intervals of the widthwisely extending notches being 10 mm to 80 mm.

7-14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) A low noise pneumatic tire according to claim 1, ~~7 or 12~~, wherein the belt-shaped sound absorbing member has a radially inner

surface in a form of an uneven surface, the uneven surface being 20 mm or less in unevenness.

16. (Currently Amended) A low noise pneumatic tire according to claim 1, ~~7 or 12,~~ wherein the fixing elastic band is formed of a synthetic resin, the fixing elastic band being 10 mm to 30 mm in width, and 0.5 mm to 2.0 mm in thickness.

17. (Original) A low noise pneumatic tire according to claim 16, wherein the fixing elastic band is formed of a polypropylene resin having flexural modulus of elasticity ranged from 1100 MPa to 1800 MPa.

18. (Previously Presented) A low noise pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein the fixing elastic band is arranged on the inner circumferential side of the belt-shaped sound absorbing member.

19. (Previously Presented) A low noise pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein the fixing elastic band is arranged on the outer circumferential side of the belt-shaped sound absorbing member and fixed on the outer circumferential surface.

20. (Previously Presented) A low noise pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein the fixing elastic band is arranged so as to pass through the inside of the belt-shaped sound absorbing member.

21-26. (Cancelled)